

was in-corporated on 31st July, 1995. Further, NMDC submitted its application to the Government of Madhya Pradesh for transfer of 11-B mining lease in favour of the JV company.

The Government of Madhya Pradesh recommended the proposal vide their letter dated 06/1/96 and sought prior approval of the Central Government from the Ministry of Mines, as required under the provisions of the MMRD Act, 1957. The State Government also proposed to incorporate certain conditions such as involvement of the State Govt. in the equity of the JV Company to the extent of 20%, setting up of a steel plant by the new Joint Venture Company in Madhya Pradesh preferably in Bastar District, recruitment of manpower from the State especially from District Bastar, establishment of schools/hospital in the area by the JV Company etc. The Ministry of Mines approved the proposal on 21st March, 1996 subject to observance of the provisions of MMPD Act, 1957 and Mineral Concession Rules, 1960 and also that the State Govt., the proposed joint venture company, i.e., Bailadila Mineral Development Company Ltd., and NMDC should arrive at a uniform and agreed set of conditions for the transfer and incorporate them in an agreement or any other appropriate legal instrument.

Ministry of Mines vide their letter dated 13/6/96 requested Government of Madhya Pradesh to inform whether NMDC has consented to the conditions that the State Government proposed to incorporate under Rule 27 (3) of the MCR, 1960. The State Government of Madhya Pradesh has requested Ministry of Steel vide their letter dated 19/6/96 and 3/8/96 to advise NMDC to send their consent to the conditions proposed by the State Government.

Shri Gurudas Dasgupta and Shri Jibon Roy, Hon'ble Members of Parliament had filed a Writ petition before the Hon'ble Calcutta High Court for grant of stay on the decision to transfer the lease of 11-B iron ore mines in favour of the Joint Venture Company. The Writ petition had been dismissed by the Calcutta High Court on grounds of jurisdiction on 10/5/1996. An interim stay of 3 weeks was granted by the High Court which was subsequently ordered by the Court to be suspended till the disposal of appeal preferred by the Joint Venture Company against the interim stay and the appeal preferred by Shri Gurudas Dasgupta and Shri Jibon Roy against the order dismissing the original Writ petition. These appeals are to come up before the regular bench.

A Public Interest Litigation (PIL) has also been filed in the High Court of Delhi in July, 1996 against the transfer of Bailadila Deposit 11-B. The case has been adjourned to 13/1/1997 for final argument.

The subject is very important and needs detailed examination on various aspects. However, since the matter is pending before the Courts, the Government would like to await the judicial verdict.

IA Growth in Domestic Traffic

*412. SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether the expectations of Indian Airlines for a growth of 15% in domestic traffic in the first six months of current year has fallen through recording zero growth:

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) the expected growth in the next six months of the year; and

(d) the steps being taken to achieve the target?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) In the last six months of the current financial year the growth in passenger carriage projected by Indian Airlines is 14.5% over the same period of the year 1995-96.

(d) The following steps have been taken to achieve the expected growth in traffic :

(i) Increased utilization of fleet through increased production of commanders, induction of commanders on contract in Alliance Air, wholly owned subsidiary of Indian Airlines and increased number of aircraft rostered per day as a result of increased productivity of engineers.

(ii) Attracting passengers by product improvement, innovation/aggressive marketing strategies, improved on-time performance and dissemination of information regarding the strengths of the company.

Task Force for Exploration

*413. SHRI N. DENNIS :

DR. RAMKRISHNA KUSMARIA :

Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have recently contemplated a new action plan to explore the availability of minerals in the country particularly in the National Capital Territory of Delhi and North-Eastern region;

(b) whether a Task Force has been set up for this purpose;

(c) if so, the details thereof and the achievements made by the Task Force, so far; and

(d) the break-up of expenditure involved in this action plan?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA) : (a) to (d). Exploration and exploitation of minerals through the country including the North-Eastern Region and the National Capital Territory of Delhi are on going plan activities of the Government. However, as a part of the overall economic development in the North-Eastern Region Government of India have recently constituted a Task Force for evolving an Action Plan to identify possibilities and thrust areas to facilitate proper exploration and exploitation of mineral resources in the North-Eastern States. Among other things, the Terms of Reference of the Task Force are to identify thrust areas for geological, environmental and mineral studies, to identify individual mineral deposits for exploitation and to recommend neogessary administrative infrastructure for mineral development in the North-Eastern States. No Task Force has been constituted for the National Capital Territory of Delhi by the Ministry of Mines, Government of India.

The Task Force has started preliminary activities and so far no expenditure has been incurred in this regard. The actual amount for exploration and exploitation of mineral resources in the country including the North-Eastern Region are as per the provisions in the Annual Plan and Five Year Plan of the country.

Import/Export of Steel

***414. SHRI SOUMYA RANJAN :** Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state :

(a) the quantity of steel produced, imported and exported during 1994-95, 1995-96 and 1996-97 (so far);

(b) the capacity utilisation of the installed and operational steel plants in the country, separately for public and private sector during these years; and

(c) the steps taken or being taken during 1996-97 to improve the capacity utilisation?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA) : (a) The quantity of finished steel produced, imported and exported during 1994-95, 1995-96 and April-November, 1996-97 is as under :

(In Million Tonnes)

	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97* (April-November) (Provisional)
Production	17.82	21.40	14.80
Import	1.70	1.57	1.04
Export	0.92	1.07	0.65

Partly Estimated.

(b) The capacity utilisation of public and private sector steel plants in production has been estimated as under :

	Public Sector	Private Sector
1994-95	86%	68%
1995-96	87%	67%
1996-97 (April-Nov.)	87%	62%

(c) In a market economy capacity utilisation would depend on several factors such as demand, availability, prices etc. In order to improve capacity utilisation, SAIL has taken up modernisation of its plants at Rourkela, Bokaro and Durgapur. Other steps being taken by SAIL include improving the quality of inputs, improving operating and maintenance practices, maximising captive power generation and improving inter-plant synergy. Similarly, Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Limited (RINL) has taken measures to improve capacity utilisation by setting up of balancing facilities, imparting training and skill development to the employees, taking up modifications to the plans and equipment to improve production and productivity capital restructuring, cost reduction etc.

Acquisition of Electric Passenger Locomotives

***415. SHRI MANORANJAN BHAKTA :** Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Railways has acquired AC 3 phase 6.000 horse-power electric passenger locomotives from M/s. Asea Brown Bover (ABB) of Switzerland under an agreement for technology transfer;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the number of passenger and freight locomotives ordered from ABB and the respective haulage capacity of these locomotives; and

(d) the time by which the process of technology transfer is likely to be completed and indigenous manufacture of ABB locos likely to commence?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN) : (a) and (b). Yes, Sir. Indian Railways have acquired 10 Nos. of 5440 HP Electric passenger locomotives alongwith one passenger locomotive to serve as bank of spares at total Free-on-Board cost of Swiss Francs 54268500 + Deutsche Marks 42042000 equivalent to Rs. 259 Crores from ABB/Switzerland. These locomotives were acquired by the Railways between Oct. '95 to Sept. '96 against the supply contract placed in July '93.

(c) Ten passenger and twenty freight locomotives were ordered on M/s. ABB in July '93. In addition, 1